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SUBJECT: EAST NUSA TENGGARA: CAMPAIGNS, CORRUPTION AND CREATIVITY

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1. (SBU) Surabaya Pol/Econ Officer and Pol/Econ Assistant met with the leadership of Golkar and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) during a recent visit to East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). These political parties currently hold 21 and 12 seats respectively of the 55 total seats in NTT's Provincial Legislature. During separate meetings on October 3, leadership of the two parties expressed nearly identical campaign platforms: assisting rural development and improving education, health, and infrastructure. PDI-P's Megawati carried NTT in the 2004 presidential race and PDI-P will try to translate this into a local victory and overcome Golkar's majority in next year's provincial elections. PDI-P will succeed only if they can use economic development and anti-corruption as rallying cries to beat Golkar's entrenched organization and cadre structure.

Golkar's Tour d'Horizon: Corruption and Creativity

2. (SBU) We met with the Regent of Kupang, Ibrahim Agustinus Medah, just seven days before the head of the NTT provincial police called for his indictment on corruption charges. During our 10 October meeting, Medah wasted no time in preempting our questions about corruption in NTT. Blaming regional autonomy, he pointed to the new challenges of big budget fiscal management, "A leader first and foremost needs creativity and a vision in order to use financial resources. Corruption is a problem here, but due to a lack of information the average villager is unaware of it. It's the NGOs and media who focus on corruption." Indeed the Consulate's NGOs contacts in NTT mentioned Medah's corruption as emblematic of the mismanagement of the general allocation fund (DAU) province-wide. Once source at Catholic Relief Services told us he had learned that DAU funds were moved into and out of various banks in a misguided effort to earn interest.

3. (SBU) Nobody in NTT suggested that pending corruption charges would be anything other than a speed bump for sitting officials like Medah and five others who have been publicly accused. Prospects for Golkar in the 2008 election are good according to Medah, who speculated that while only 10% of NTT has ready access to information about Golkar's candidates, the rest of the rural population will make it to the polling stations through the efforts of party cadre on the scene. "Making people aware of our mission and vision is a real challenge here," said Medah. He put the level of voter

participation between 80-90% and attributed any lack of participation to geographical limitations, limited penetration of media, and poor infrastructure.

#### PDI-P: The Search for Post "Big Man" Politics

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14. (SBU) PDI-P party officials were also optimistic and said they expect victory in the legislative and gubernatorial elections. PDI-P's presidential candidate Megawati carried the province during the national elections in 2004 and the NTT party secretary hopes that this national victory can be translated

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into a local one next year. PDI-P will seek to burnish its reputation as the party of the common man, while painting Golkar as the party of corrupt bureaucrats. The ten PDI-P Party workers and officials who met with us in their party offices told us that PDI-P is a young party and draws its members from all levels of NTT population; farmers, fishermen and small business people. Citing the advantages of Golkar incumbency, PDI-P officials said campaigning on the issues against Golkar's well-known "big figures" is easily stymied by well-organized Golkar cadres who get out the vote. They hope to counteract this advantage by educating voters and an improving their own get-out-the-vote effort.

MCCLELLAND